

S P E E C H

OF THE

HON. THOMAS MORRIS,

OF OHIO,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

FEBRUARY 6, 1839,

IN REPLY TO THE

HON. HENRY CLAY.

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PRESENTED BY

President Gilman

SPEECH OF HON. T. MORRIS.

Mr. President: I rise to present for the consideration of the Senate, numerous petitions signed by, not only citizens of my own State, but citizens of several other States, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. These petitioners, amounting in number to several thousand, have thought proper to make me their organ, in communicating to Congress their opinions and wishes on subjects which, to them, appear of the highest importance. These petitions, sir, are on the subject of slavery, the slave trade as carried on within and from this District, the slave trade between the different States of this Confederacy, between this country and Texas, and against the admission of that country into the Union, and also against that of any other State, whose constitution and laws recognise or permit slavery. I take this opportunity to present all these petitions together, having detained some of them for a considerable time in my hands, in order that as small a portion of the attention of the Senate might be taken up on their account as would be consistent with a strict regard to the rights of the petitioners. And I now present them under the most peculiar circumstances that have ever probably transpired in this or any other country. I present them on the heel of the petitions which have been presented by the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Clay] signed by the inhabitants of this District, praying that Congress would not receive petitions on the subject of slavery in the District, from any body of men or citizens, but themselves. This is something new; it is one of the devices of the slave power, and most extraordinary in itself. These petitions I am bound in duty to present—a duty which I cheerfully perform, for I consider it not only a duty but an honor. The respectable names which these petitions bear, and being against a practice which I as deeply deprecate and deplore as they can possibly do, yet I well know the fate of these petitions; and I also know the time, place, and disadvantage under which I present them. In availing myself of this opportunity to explain my own views on this agitating topic, and to explain and justify the character and proceedings of these petitioners, it must be obvious to all that I am surrounded with no ordinary discouragements. The strong prejudice which is evidenced by the petitioners of the District, the unwillingness of the Senate to hear, the power which is arrayed against me on this occasion, as well as in opposition to those whose rights I am anxious to maintain; opposed by

he very lions of debate in this body, who are cheered on by an applauding gallery and surrounding interests, is enough to produce dismay in one far more able and eloquent than the lone and humble individual who now addresses you. What, sir, can there be to induce me to appear on this public arena, opposed by such powerful odds? Nothing, sir, nothing but I strong sense of duty, and a deep conviction that the cause I advocate is just; that the petitioners whom I represent are honest, upright, intelligent, and respectable citizens; men who love their country, who are anxious to promote its best interests, and who are actuated by the purest patriotism, as well as the deepest philanthropy and benevolence. In representing such men, and in such a cause, though by the most feeble means, one would suppose that, on the floor of the Senate of the United States, order, and a decent respect to the opinions of others, would prevail. From the causes which I have mentioned, I can hardly hope for this. I expect to proceed through scenes which ill become this hall; but nothing shall deter me from a full and faithful discharge of my duty on this important occasion. Permit me, sir, to remind gentlemen that I have been now six years a member of this body. I have seldom, perhaps too seldom, in the opinion of many of my constituents, pressed myself upon the notice of the Senate, and taken up their time in useless and windy debate. I question very much if I have occupied the time of the Senate during the six years as some gentlemen have during six weeks, or even six days. I hope, therefore, that I shall not be thought obtrusive, or charged with taking up time with abolition petitions. I hope, Mr. President, to hear no more about agitating this slave question here. Who has began the agitation now? The Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. Clay.] Who has responded to that agitation, and congratulated the Senate and the country on its results? The Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. Calhoun.] And pray, sir, under what circumstances is this agitation begun? Let it be remembered, let us collect the facts from the records on your table, that when I, as a member of this body, but a few days since offered a resolution as the foundation of proceedings on these petitions, gentlemen, as if operated on by an electric shock, sprung from their seats and objected to its introduction. And when you, sir, decided that it was the right of every member to introduce such motion or resolution as he pleased, being responsible to his constituents and this body for the abuse of this right, gentlemen seemed to wonder that the Senate had no power to prevent the action of one of its members in cases like this, and the poor privilege of having the resolution printed, by order of the Senate, was denied.

Let the Senator from South Carolina before me remember that, at the last session, when he offered resolutions on the subject of slavery, they were not only received without objection, but printed, voted on, and decided; and let the Senator from Kentucky reflect that the petition which he offered against our right was also received and ordered to be printed without a single dissenting voice; and I call on the Senate and

the country to remember that the resolutions which I have offered on the same subject have not only been refused the printing, but have been laid on the table without being debated or referred. Posterity, which shall read the proceedings of this time, may well wonder what power could induce the Senate of the United States to proceed in such a strange and contradictory manner. Permit me to tell the country now what this power behind the throne, greater than the throne itself, is. It is the power of SLAVERY. It is a power, according to the calculation of the Senator from Kentucky, which owns twelve hundred millions of dollars in human beings as property; and if money is power, this power is not to be conceived or calculated; a power which claims human property more than double the amount which the whole money of the world could purchase. What can stand before this power? Truth, everlasting truth, will yet overthrow it. This power is aiming to govern the country, its constitutions and laws; but it is not certain of success, tremendous as it is, without foreign or other aid. Let it be borne in mind that the Bank power, some years since, during what has been called the panic session, had influence sufficient in this body, and upon this floor, to prevent the reception of petitions against the action of the Senate on their resolutions of censure against the President. The country took instant alarm, and the political complexion of this body was changed as soon as possible. The same power, though double in means and in strength, is now doing the same thing. This is the array of power that even now is attempting such an unwarrantable course in this country; and the people are also now moving against the slave, as they formerly did against the Bank power. It, too, begins to tremble for its safety. What is to be done? Why, petitions are received and ordered to be printed, against the right of petitions which are not received, and the whole power of debate is thrown into the scale with the slaveholding power. But all will not do; these two powers must now be united: an amalgamation of the black power of the South with the white power of the North must take place, as either, separately, cannot succeed in destruction of the liberty of speech and the press, and the right of petition. Let me tell gentlemen that both united will never succeed; as I said on a former day, God forbid that they should ever rule this country. I have seen this billing and cooing between these different interests for some time past; I informed my private friends of the political party with which I have heretofore acted, during the first week of this session, that these powers were forming a union to overthrow the present administration; and I warned them of the folly and mischief they were doing in their abuse of those who were opposed to slavery. All doubts are now terminated. The display made by the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. Clay,] and his denunciations of these petitioners as abolitionists, and the hearty response and cordial embrace which his efforts met from the Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. Calhoun,] clearly shows that new moves have taken place on the political chess

board, and new coalitions are formed, new compromises and new bargains, settling and disposing of the rights of the country for the advantage of political aspirants.

The gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. Calhoun] seemed, at the conclusion of the argument made by the Senator from Kentucky, to be filled not only with delight but with ecstasy. He told us that about twelve months since HE had offered a resolution which turned the tide in favor of the great principle of State rights, and says he is highly pleased with the course taken by the Kentucky Senator. All is now safe by the acts of that Senator. The South is now consolidated as one man; it was a great epoch in our history, but we have now passed it; it is the beginning of a moral revolution; slavery, so far from being a political evil, is a great blessing; both races have been improved by it; and that abolition is now DEAD, and will soon be forgotten. So far the Senator from South Carolina, as I understand him. But, sir, is this really the case? Is the South united as one man, and is the Senator from Kentucky the great centre of attraction? What a lesson to the friends of the present Administration, who have been throwing themselves into the arms of the southern slave-power for support! The black enchantment I hope is now at an end—the dream dissolved, and we awake into open day. No longer is there any uncertainty or any doubt on this subject. But is the great epoch passed; is it not rather just beginning? Is abolitionism DEAD—or is it just awaking into life? Is the right of petition strangled and forgotten—or is it increasing in strength and force? These are serious questions for the gentleman's consideration that may damp the ardor of his joy, if examined with an impartial mind, and looked at with an unprejudiced eye. Sir, when these paeans were sung over the death of abolitionists, and, of course their right to liberty of speech and the press, at least in fancy's eye, we might have seen them lying in heaps upon heaps, like the enemies of the strong man in days of old. But let me bring back the gentleman's mind from this delightful scene of abolition death, to sober realities and solemn facts. I have now lying before me the names of thousands of living witnesses that slavery has not entirely conquered liberty; that abolitionists (for so are all these petitioners called) are not *all dead*. These are my first proofs to show the gentleman his ideas are all fancy. I have also, sir, since the commencement of this debate, received a newspaper, as if sent by Providence to suit the occasion, and by whom I know not. It is the Cincinnati Republican of the 2d instant, which contains an extract from the Louisville Advertiser, a paper printed in Kentucky, in Louisville, our sister city; and though about one hundred and fifty miles below us, it is but a few hours distant. That paper is the leading Administration journal, too, as I am informed, in Kentucky. Hear what it says on the death of abolition:

“ABOLITION—CINCINNATI—THE LOUISVILLE ADVERTISER.—We copy the following notice of an article which we lately published, upon

the subject of abolition movements in this quarter, from the Louisville Advertiser :

‘**ABOLITION.**—The reader is referred to an interesting article which we have copied from the Cincinnati Republican—a paper which lately supported the principles of Democracy ; a paper which has *turned*, but not quite far enough to act with the Adams’s and Slades in Congress, or the Whig abolitionists of Ohio. It does not, however, give a correct view of the strength of the abolitionists in Cincinnati. There they are in the ascendant. They control the city elections, regulate what may be termed the morals of the city, give tone to public opinion, and “rule the roast” by virtue of their superior piety and intelligence. The Republican tells us that they are not laboring *Loco Focos*—but “drones” and “consumers”—the “rich and well born” of course; men who have leisure and means, and a disposition to employ the latter, to equalize whites and blacks in the slaveholding States. Even now, the absconding slave is perfectly safe in Cincinnati. We doubt whether an instance can be adduced of the recovery of a runaway in that place in the last four years. When negroes reach “the Queen city” they are protected by its intelligence, its piety and its wealth. They receive the aid of the *elite* of the Buckeyes, and we have a strong faction in Kentucky struggling zealously to make her one of the dependencies of Cincinnati! Let our mutual sons go on. The day of mutual retribution is at hand—much nearer than is now imagined. The Republican which still looks with a friendly eye to the slaveholding States, warns us of the danger which exists, although its newborn zeal for Whiggery prompts it to insist, indirectly, on the right of petitioning Congress to abolish slavery. There are about two hundred and fifty abolition societies in Ohio at the present time, and, from the circular issued at head quarters, Cincinnati, it appears that agents are to be sent through every county to distribute books and pamphlets designed to inflame the public mind, and then organize additional societies—or, rather, form new clans, to aid in the war which has been commenced on the slaveholding States.’”

I do not, sir, underwrite for the truth of this statement as an entire whole ; much of it I repel as an unjust charge on my fellow-citizens of Cincinnati ; but, as it comes from a slaveholding State—from the State of the Senator who has so eloquently anathematized abolitionists that it is almost a pity they could not die under such sweet sounds—and as the South Carolina Senator pronounces them dead, I produce this from a slaveholding State for the special benefit and consolation of the two Senators. It comes from a source to which I am sure both gentlemen ought to give credit. But suppose, sir, that abolitionism is dead, is liberty dead also, and slavery triumphant ? Is liberty of speech, of the press, and the right of petition also dead ? True, it has been strangled here ; but gentlemen will find themselves in great error if they suppose it also strangled in the country ; and the very attempt in legislative bodies to sustain a local and individual interest,

to the destruction of our rights, proves that those rights are not dead, but a living principle which slavery cannot extinguish; and be my lot what it may, I shall, to the utmost of my abilities, under all circumstances, and at all times, contend for that freedom which is the common gift of the Creator to all men, and against the power of these two great interests—the slave power of the South, and banking power of the North—which are now uniting to rule this country. The cotton bale and the bank note have formed an alliance; the credit system with slave labor. These two congenial spirits have at last met and embraced each other, both looking to the same object—to live upon the unrequited labor of others—and have now erected for themselves a common platform, as was intimated during the last session, on which they can meet, and bid defiance, as they hope, to free principles and free labor.

With these introductory remarks, permit me, sir, to say it here, and let no one pretend to misunderstand or misrepresent me, that I charge gentlemen, when they use the words abolitionists, they mean petitioners here such as I now present—men who love liberty, and are opposed to slavery—that in behalf of these citizens I speak; and, by whatever name they may be called, it is those who are opposed to slavery whose cause I advocate. I make no war upon the rights of others. I do not act but what is moral, constitutional, and legal, against the peculiar institutions of any State; but acts only in defence of my own rights, of my fellow-citizens, and, above all, of my State, I shall not cease while the current of life shall continue to flow.

I shall, Mr. President, in the further consideration of this subject, endeavor to prove, first, the right of the people to petition; second, why slavery is wrong, and why I am opposed to it; third, the power of slavery in this country, and its dangers; next, answer the question, so often asked, what have the free States to do with slavery? Then make some remarks by way of answer to the arguments of the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. Clay.]

Mr. President, the duty I am requested to perform is one of the highest which a Representative can be called on to discharge. It is to make known to the legislative body the will and the wishes of his constituents and fellow-citizens; and, in the present case, I feel honored by the confidence reposed in me, and proceed to discharge the duty. The petitioners have not trusted to my fallible judgment alone, but have declared, in written documents, the most solemn expression of their will. It is true these petitions have not been sent here by the whole people of the United States, but from a portion of them only; yet such is the justice of their claim, and the sure foundation upon which it rests, that no portion of the American people, until a day or two past, have thought it either safe or expedient to present counter petitions; and even now, when counter petitions have been presented, they dare not justify slavery, and the selling of men and women in this District, but content themselves with objecting to others enjoying the rights they practice, and praying Congress not to receive

or hear petitions from the people of the States—a new device of slave power this, never before thought of or practised in any country. I would have been gratified if the inventors of this system, which denies to others what they practice themselves, had, in their petition, attempted to justify slavery and the slave trade in the District, if they believe the practice just, that their names might have gone down to posterity. No, sir; very few yet have the moral courage to record their names to such an avowal; and even some of these petitioners are so squeamish on this subject, as to say that they might, from conscientious principles, be prevented from holding slaves. Not so, sir, with the petitioners which I have the honor to represent; they are anxious that their sentiments and their names should be made matter of record; they have no qualms of conscience on this subject; they have deep convictions and a firm belief that slavery is an existing evil, incompatible with the principles of political liberty, at war with our system of Government, and extending a baleful and blasting influence over our country, withering and blighting its fairest prospects and brightest hopes. Who has said that these petitions are unjust in principle, and on that ground ought not to be granted? Who has said that slavery is not an evil? Who has said it does not tarnish the fair fame of our country? Who has said it does not bring dissipation and feebleness to one race, and poverty and wretchedness to another, in its train? Who has said it is not unjust to the slave and injurious to the happiness and best interest of the master? Who has said it does not break the bonds of human affection, by separating the wife from the husband, and children from their parents? In fine, who has said it is not a blot upon our country's honor, and a deep and foul stain upon her institutions? Few, very few, perhaps none but him who lives upon its labor, regardless of its misery; and even many whose local situations are within its jurisdiction, acknowledge its injustice, and deprecate its continuance; while millions of freemen deplore its existence, and look forward with strong hope to its final termination. **SLAVERY!** a word, like a secret idol, though too obnoxious or sacred to be pronounced here but by those who worship at its shrine—and should one who is not such worshipper happen to pronounce the word, the most disastrous consequences are immediately predicted, the Union is to be dissolved, and the South to take care of itself.

Do not suppose, Mr. President, that I feel as if engaged in a forbidden or improvident act. No such thing. I am contending with a local and "*peculiar*" interest, an interest which has already banded together a force sufficient to seize upon every avenue by which a petition can enter this chamber, and exclude all without its leave. I am not now contending for the rights of the negro, rights which his Creator gave him and which his fellow-man has usurped or taken away. No, sir! I am contending for the rights of the white person in the free States, and am endeavoring to prevent them from being trodden down and destroyed by that power which claims the black person as

properly. I am endeavoring to sound the alarm to my fellow-citizens that this power, tremendous as it is, is endeavoring to unite itself with the monied power of the country, in order to extend its dominion and perpetuate its existence. I am endeavoring to drive from the back of the *negro slave* the politician who has seated himself there to ride into office for the purpose of carrying out the object of this unholy combination. The chains of slavery are sufficiently strong, without being riveted anew by tinkering politicians of the free States. I feel myself compelled into this contest, in defence of the institutions of my own State, the persons and firesides of her citizens, from the insatiable grasp of the slaveholding power as being used and felt in the free States. To say that I am opposed to slavery in the abstract, are but cold and unmeaning words, if, however, capable of any meaning whatever, they may fairly be construed into a love for its existence; and such I sincerely believe to be the feeling of many in the free States who use the phrase. I, sir, am not only opposed to slavery in the abstract, but also in its whole volume, in its theory as well as practice. This principle is deeply implanted within me; it has "grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength." In my infant years I learned to hate slavery. Your fathers taught me it was wrong in their Declaration of Independence: the doctrines which they promulgated to the world, and upon the truth of which they staked the issue of the contest that made us a nation. They proclaimed "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that amongst these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." These truths are solemnly declared by them. I believed then, and believe now, they are self-evident. Who can acknowledge this, and not be opposed to slavery? It is, then, because I love the principles which brought your government into existence, and which have become the corner stone of the building supporting you, sir, in that chair, and giving to myself and other Senators seats in this body—it is because I love all this, that I hate slavery. Is it because I contend for the right of petition, and am opposed to slavery, that I have been denounced by many as an abolitionist? Yes; Virginia newspapers have so denounced me, and called upon the Legislature of my State to dismiss me from public confidence. Who taught me to hate slavery, and every other oppression? *Jefferson*, the great and the good *Jefferson*! Yes, *Virginia Senators*, it was your own *Jefferson*, Virginia's favorite son, a man who did more for the natural liberty of man, and the civil liberty of his country, than any man that ever lived in our country; it was him who taught me to hate slavery; it was in his school I was brought up. That Mr. *Jefferson* was as much opposed to slavery as any man that ever lived in our country, there can be no doubt; his life and his writings abundantly prove the fact. I hold in my hand a copy, as he penned it, of the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, a part of which was stricken out, as he says, in compliance with the wishes of South Carolina and Georgia. I

will read it. Speaking of the wrongs done us by the British Government, in introducing slaves among us, he says : " He (the British King) has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred right of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into SLAVERY in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be BOUGHT and SOLD, he has prostituted his prerogative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce, and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms against us, and purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering the people on whom he has also obtruded them, thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another." Thus far this great statesman and philanthropist. Had his contemporaries been ruled by his opinions, the country had now been at rest on this exciting topic. What abolitionist, sir, has used stronger language against slavery than Mr. Jefferson has done ? " Cruel war against human nature," " violating its most sacred rights," " piratical warfare," " opprobrium of infidel powers," " a market where men should be bought and sold," " execrable commerce," " assemblage of horrors," " crimes committed against the liberty of the people," are the brands which Mr. Jefferson has burned into the forehead of slavery and the slave trade. When, sir, have I, or any other person opposed to slavery, spoken in stronger and more opprobrious terms of slavery than this ? You have caused the bust of this great man to be placed in the centre of your Capitol, in that conspicuous part where every visiter must see it, with its hand resting on the Declaration of Independence, engraved upon marble. Why have you done this ? Is it not mockery ? Or is it to remind us continually of the wickedness and danger of slavery ? I never pass that statue without new and increased veneration for the man it represents, and increased repugnance and sorrow that he did not succeed in driving slavery entirely from the country. Sir, if I am an abolitionist, Jefferson made me so ; and I only regret that the disciple should be so far behind the master, both in doctrine and practice. But, sir, other reasons and other causes have combined to fix and establish my principles in this matter, never, I trust, to be shaken. A free State was the place of my birth ; a free Territory the theatre of my juvenile actions. Ohio is my country, endeared to me by every fond recollection. She gave me political existence, and taught me in her political school ; and I should be worse than an unnatural son did I forget or disobey her precepts. In her Constitution it is declared, " That all men are born equal, free and independent," and " that there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the State,

otherwise than for the punishment of crimes." Shall I stand up for slavery in any case, condemned as it is by such high authority as this? No, never! But this is not all. Indiana, our younger Western sister, endeared to us by every social and political tie, a State formed in the same country as Ohio, from whose territory slavery was forever excluded by the ordinance of July, 1787—she, too, has declared her abhorrence of slavery in more strong and emphatic terms than we have done. In her constitution, after prohibiting slavery, or involuntary servitude being introduced into the State, she declares, "But as to the holding any part of the human creation in slavery, or involuntary servitude, can originate only in *tyranny* and *usurpation*, no alteration of her constitution should ever take place, so as to introduce slavery or involuntary servitude into the State, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes whereof the party had been duly convicted." Illinois and Michigan also formed their constitutions on the same principles. After such a cloud of witnesses against slavery, and whose testimony is so clear and explicit, as a citizen of Ohio, I should be recreant to every principle of honor and of justice, to be found the apologist or advocate of slavery in any State, or in any country whatever. No, I cannot be so inconsistent as to say I am opposed to slavery in the *abstract*, in its separation from a human being, and still lend my aid to build it up, and make it perpetual in its operation and effects upon *man* in this or any other country. I also, in early life, saw a slave kneel before his master, and hold up his hands with as much apparent submission, humility, and adoration, as a man would have done before his Maker, while his master, with outstretched rod, stood over him. This, I thought, is slavery; one man subjected to the will and power of another, and the laws affording him no protection, and he has to beg pardon of man, because he has offended man, (not the laws,) as if his master were a superior and all powerful being. Yes, this is slavery, boasted American slavery, without which, it is contended even here, that the union of these States would be dissolved in a day, yes, even in an hour! Humiliating thought, that we are bound together as States by the chains of slavery! It cannot be—the blood and the tears of slavery form no part of the cement of our Union—and it is hoped that by falling on its bands they may never corrode and eat them asunder. We who are opposed to and deplore the existence of slavery in our country, are frequently asked, both in public and private, what have you to do with slavery? It does not exist in your State; it does not disturb you! Ah, sir, would to God it were so—that we had nothing to do with slavery, nothing to fear from its power, or its action within our own borders, that its name and its miseries were unknown to us. But this is not our lot; we live upon its borders, and in hearing of its cries; yet we are unwilling to acknowledge, that if we enter its territories and violate its laws, that we should be punished at its pleasure. We do not complain of this, though it might well be considered just ground of complaint. It is our firesides, our rights, our privileges, the safety of our friends, as

well as the sovereignty and independence of our State, that we are now called upon to protect and defend. The slave interest has at this moment the whole power of the country in its hands. It claims the President as a Northern man with Southern feelings, thus making the Chief Magistrate the head of an interest, or a party, and not of the country and the people at large. It has the cabinet of the President, three members of which are from the slave States, and one who wrote a book in favor of Southern slavery, but which fell dead from the press, a book which I have seen, in my own family, thrown musty upon the shelf. Here then is a decided majority in favor of the slave interest. It has five out of nine judges of the Supreme Court; here, also, is a majority from the slave States. It has, with the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Clerks of both Houses, the army and the navy; and the bureaus, have, I am told, about the same proportion. One would suppose that, with all this power operating in this Government, it would be content to *permit*—yes, I will use the word *permit*—it would be content to permit us, who live in the free States, to enjoy our firesides and our homes in quietness; but this is not the case. The slaveholders and slave laws claim that as property, which the free States know only as persons, a reasoning property, which, of its own will and mere motion, is frequently found in our States; and upon which THING we sometimes bestow food and raiment if it appear hungry and perishing, believing it to be a human being; this perhaps is owing to our want of vision to discover the process by which a man is converted into a THING. For this act of ours, which is not prohibited by our laws, but prompted by every feeling, christian and humane, the slaveholding power enters our territory, tramples under foot the sovereignty of our State, violates the sanctity of private residence, seizes our citizens, and disregarding the authority of our laws, transports them into its own jurisdiction, casts them into prison, confines them in fetters, and loads them with chains, for pretended offences against their own laws, found by willing grand juries upon the oath (to use the language of the late Governor of Ohio) of a perjured villain. Is this fancy, or is it fact, sober reality, solemn fact? Need I say, all this, and much more, is now matter of history in the case of the Rev. John B. Mahan, of Brown county, Ohio? Yes, it is so; but this is but the beginning—a case of equal outrage has lately occurred, if newspapers are to be relied on, in the seizure of a citizen of Ohio, without even the forms of law, and who was carried into Virginia and shamefully punished by tar and feathers and other disgraceful means, and rode upon a rail, according to the order of Judge Lynch, and this, only because in Ohio he was an abolitionist. Would I could stop here—but I cannot. This slave interest or power seizes upon persons of color in our State, carries them into States where men are property, and makes merchandize of them, sometimes under sanction of law, but more properly by its abuse, and sometimes by mere personal

force, thus disturbing our quiet and harrassing our citizens. A case of this kind has lately occurred, where a colored boy was seduced from Ohio into Indiana, taken from thence into Alabama and sold as a slave ; and to the honor of the slave States, and gentlemen who administer the laws there, be it said, that many who have thus been taken and sold by the connivance, if not downright corruption, of citizens in the free States, have been liberated and adjudged free in the States where they have been sold, as was the case of the boy mentioned, who was sold in Alabama. Slave power is seeking to establish itself in every State, in defiance of the constitution and laws of the States within which it is prohibited. In order to secure its power beyond the reach of the States, it claims its parentage from the Constitution of the United States. It demands of us total silence as to its proceedings, denies to our citizens the liberty of speech and the press, and punishes them by mobs and violence for the exercise of these rights. It has sent its agents into the free states for the purpose of influencing their Legislatures to pass laws for the security of its power within such State, and for the enacting new offences and new punishments for their own citizens, so as to give additional security to its interest. It demands to be heard in its own person in the hall of our Legislature, and mingle in debate there. Sir, in every stage of these oppressions and abuses, permit me to say, in the language of the Declaration of Independence—and no language could be more appropriate—we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms, and our repeated petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A power, whose character is marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to rule over a free people. In our sufferings and our wrongs we have besought our fellow-citizens to aid us in the preservation of our constitutional rights, but, influenced by the love of gain or arbitrary power, they have sometimes disregarded all the sacred rights of man, and answered in violence, burnings, and murder. After all these transactions, which are now of public notoriety and matter of record, shall we of the free States tauntingly be asked what we have to do with slavery ? We should rejoice, indeed, if the evils of slavery were removed far from us, that it could be said with truth, that we have nothing to do with slavery. Our citizens have not entered its territories for the purpose of obstructing its laws, nor do we wish to do so, nor would we justify any individual in such act ; yet we have been branded and stigmatized by its friends and advocates, both in the free and slave States, as incendiaries, fanatics, disorganizers, enemies to our country, and as wishing to dissolve the Union. We have borne all this without complaint or resistance, and only ask to be secure in our persons, by our own firesides, and in the free exercise of our thoughts and opinions in speaking, writing, printing, and publishing on the subject of slavery, that which appears to us to be just and right ; because we all know the power of truth, and that it will ultimately prevail, in despite of all opposition. But in the exercise of all these rights, we acknowledge subjection to the laws of the State in which we

are, and our liability for their abuse. We wish peace with all men ; and that the most amicable relations and free intercourse may exist between the citizens of our State and our neighboring slaveholding States; we will not enter their States, either in our proper persons, or by commissioners, legislative resolutions, or otherwise, to interfere with their slave policy or slave laws, and we shall expect from them and their citizens a like return, that they do not enter our territories for the purpose of violating our laws in the punishment of our people for the exercise of their undoubted rights—the liberty of speech and of the press on the subject of slavery. We ask that no man shall be seized and transported beyond our State in violation of our own laws, and that we shall not be carried into and imprisoned in another State for acts done in our own. We contend that the slaveholding power is properly chargeable with all the riots and disorders which take place on account of slavery. We can live in peace with all our sister States ; if that power will be controlled by law, each can exercise and enjoy the full benefits secured by their own laws ; and this is all we ask. If we hold up slavery to the view of an impartial public as it is, and if such view creates astonishment and indignation, surely we are not to be charged as libellers. A State institution ought to be considered the pride, not the shame of the State ; and, if we falsify such institutions, the disgrace is ours, not theirs. If slavery, however, is a blemish, a blot, an eating cancer in the body politic, it is not our fault if, by holding it up, others should see in the mirror of truth its deformity, and shrink back from the view. We have not, and we intend not, to use any weapons against slavery but the moral power of truth and the force of public opinion. If we enter the slave States and tamper with the slave contrary to law, punish us, we deserve it ; and if the slaveholder is found in a free State, and is guilty of a breach of the law there, he also ought to be punished. These petitioners, as far as I understand them, disclaim all right to enter a slave State for the purpose of intercourse with the slave. It is the master whom they wish to address ; and they ask and ought to receive protection from the laws, as they are willing to be judged by the laws. We invite into the arena of public discussion in our State the slaveholder ; we are willing to hear his reasons and facts in favor of slavery or against abolitionists : we do not fear his errors while we are ourselves free to combat them. The angry feelings which in some degree exist between the citizens of the free and slaveholding States on account of slavery, are, in many cases, properly chargeable to those who defend and support slavery. Attempts are almost daily making to force the execution of slave laws in the free States ; at least, their power and principles : and no term is too reproachful to be applied to those who resist such acts, and contend for the rights secured to every man under their own laws. We are often reminded that we ought to take color as evidence of property in a human being. We do not believe in such evidence, nor do we believe that a man can justly be made property by human laws. We acknowledge, however, that a *man*, not a *thing*, may

be held to service or labor under the laws of a State, and, if he escape into another State, he ought to be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such labor or service may be due; that this delivery ought to be in pursuance of the laws of the State where such person is found, and not by virtue of any act of Congress.

This brings me, Mr. President, to the consideration of the petition, presented by the Senator from Kentucky, and to an examination of the views he has presented to the Senate on this highly important subject. Sir, I feel, I sensibly feel, my inadequacy in entering into a controversy with that old and veteran Senator; but nothing high or low shall prevent me from an honest discharge of my duty here. If imperfectly done it may be ascribed to the want of ability, not intention. If the power of my mind, and the strength of my body, were equal to the task, I would arouse every man, yes, every woman and child in the country, to the danger which besets them, if such doctrines and views as are presented by the Senator should ever be carried into effect. His denunciations are against abolitionists, and under that term are classed all those who petition Congress on the subject of slavery. Such I understand to be his argument, and as such I shall treat it. I, in the first place, put in a broad denial to all his general facts, charging this portion of my fellow citizens with improper motives, or dangerous designs. That their acts are lawful he does not pretend to deny. I call for proof to sustain his charges. None such has been offered, and none such exists, or can be found. I repel them as calumnies double-distilled in the alembic of slavery. I deny them, also, in the particulars and inferences; and let us see upon what ground they rest, or by what process of reasoning they are sustained.

The very first view of these petitioners against our right of petition, strikes the mind that more is intended than at first meets the eye. Why was the committee on the District overlooked in this case, and the Senator from Kentucky made the organ of communication? Is it understood that anti-abolitionism is a passport to popular favor, and that the action of this District shall present for that favor to the public a gentleman upon this hobby? Is this petition presented as a subject of fair legislation? Was it solicited by members of Congress, from citizens here, for political effect? Let the country judge. The petitioners state that no persons but themselves are authorized to interfere with slavery in the District; that Congress are their own Legislature; and the question of slavery in the District is only between them and their constituted legislators; and they protest against all interference of others. But, sir, as if ashamed of this open position in favor of slavery, they in a very coy manner say that some of them are not slaveholders, and might be forbidden by conscience to hold slaves. There is more dictation, more political heresy, more dangerous doctrine contained in this petition, than I have ever before seen couched together in so many words. We! Congress their own legislature in all that concerns this District! Let those who may

put on the city livery, and legislate for them and not for his constituents, do so ; for myself, I came here with a different view, and for different purposes. I came a freeman, to represent the people of Ohio ; and I intend to leave this as such representative without wearing any other livery. Why talk about executive usurpation and influence over the members of Congress ? I have always viewed this District influence as far more dangerous than that of any other power. It has been able to extort, yes, extort from Congress millions to pay District debts, make District improvements, and in support of the civil and criminal jurisprudence of the District. Pray, sir, what right has Congress to pay the corporate debts of the cities in the District more than the debts of the corporate cities in your state and mine ? None, sir. Yet this has been done to a vast amount, and the next step is, that we, who pay all this, shall not be permitted to petition Congress on the subject of their institutions, for, if we can be prevented in one case, we can in all possible cases. Mark, sir, how plain a tale will silence these petitioners. If slavery in the District concerns only the inhabitants and Congress, so does all municipal regulations. Should they extend to granting lottery, gaming houses, tippling-houses, and other places calculated to promote and encourage vice—should a representative in Congress be instructed by his constituents to use his influence, and vote against such establishments, and the people of the District should instruct him to vote for them, which should he obey ? To state the question is to answer it ; otherwise the boasted right of instruction by the constituent body is “mere sound,” signifying nothing. Sir, the inhabitants of this District are subject to state legislation and state policy ; they cannot complain of this, for their condition is voluntary ; and as this city is the focus of power, of influence, and considered also as that of fashion, if not of folly, and as the streams which flow from here irradiate the whole country, it is right, it is proper, that it should be subject to state policy and state power, and not used as a leaven to ferment and corrupt the whole body politic.

The honorable Senator has said the petition, though from a city, is the fair expression of the opinion of the District. As such I treated it, am willing to acknowledge the respectability of the petitioners and their rights, and I claim for the people of my own state equal respectability and equal rights that the people of the District are entitled to : any peculiar rights and advantages I cannot admit.

I agree with the Senator that the proceedings on abolition petitions, heretofore, have not been the most wise and prudent course. They ought to have been referred and acted on. Such was my object, a day or two since, when I laid on your table a resolution to refer them to a committee for inquiry. You did not suffer it, sir, to be printed. The country and posterity will judge between the people whom I represent, and those who caused to be printed the petition from the city. It cannot be possible that justice can have been done in both cases.

The exclusive legislation of Congress over the District is as much the act of the constituent body, as the general legislation of Congress over the states, and to the operation of this act have the people within the District submitted themselves. I cannot, however, join the Senator that the majority, in refusing to receive and refer petitions, did not intend to destroy or impair the right in this particular. They certainly have done so.

The Senator admits the abolitionists are now formidable; that something must be done to produce harmony. Yes, sir, do justice, and harmony will be restored. Act impartially, that justice may be done; hear petitions on both sides, if they are offered, and give righteous judgments, and your people will be satisfied. You cannot compromise them out of their rights, nor lull them to sleep with fallacies in the shape of reports. You cannot conquer them by rebuke, nor deceive them by sophistry. Remember you cannot now turn public opinion, nor can you overthrow. You must, and you will, abandon the high ground you have taken, and receive petitions. The reason of the case, the argument, and the judgment of the people, are all against you. One in this cause can "chase a thousand," and the voice of justice will be heard whenever you agitate the subject. In Indiana, the right of petition has been most nobly advocated in a protest, by a member, against some puny resolutions of the Legislature of that state to white-wash slavery. Permit me to read a paragraph, worthy of an American freeman:

"But who would have thought until lately, that any would have doubted the right of petition in a respectful manner to Congress? Who would have believed, that Congress had any authority to refuse to consider the petitions of the people? Such a step would overthrow the autocrat of Russia, or cost the Grand Seignor of Constantinople his head. Can it be possible therefore, that it has been reserved for a republican Government, in a land boasting of its free institutions, to set the first precedent of this kind? Our city councils, our courts of justice, every department of Government, are approached by petition, however unanswered, or absurd, so that its terms are respectful. None go away unread, or unheard. The life of every individual is a perfect illustration of the subject of petitioning. Petition is the language of want, of pain, of sorrow, of man in all his sad variety of woes, imploring relief, at the hand of some power superior to himself. Petitioning is the foundation of all Government, and of all administrations of law. Yet it has been reserved for our Congress, seconded indirectly by the vote of this Legislature, to question this right, hitherto supposed to be so old, so heaven-deeded, so undoubted that our fathers did not think it necessary to place a guaranty of it in the first draft of the Federal Constitution. Yet this sacred right has been at one blow, driven, destroyed, and trodden under the feet of slavery. The old bulwarks of our Federal and State Constitutions seem utterly to have been forgotten, which declares, 'that the freedom of speech, and the press shall

not be abridged, nor the right of the people, peaceably to assemble and *petition* for the redress of their grievances.' ”

These, sir, are the sentiments which make abolitionists formidable, and set at nought all your councils for their overthrow. The honorable Senator not only admits that abolitionists are formidable, but that they consist of three classes. The friends of humanity and justice, or those actuated by those principles compose one class. These form a very numerous class, and the acknowledgment of the Senator proves the immutable principles upon which opposition to slavery rests. Men are opposed to it from principles of humanity and justice—men are abolitionists, he admits, on that account. We thank the Senator for teaching us that word, we intend to improve it. The next class of abolitionists, the Senator says, are so, apparently, for the purpose of advocating the right of petition. What are we to understand from this? That the right of petition needs advocacy. Who has denied this right, or who has attempted to abridge it? The slaveholding power, that power which avoids open discussion, and the free exercise of opinion: it is that power alone which renders the advocacy of the right of petition necessary, having seized upon all the powers of the Government. It is fast uniting together these opposed to its iron rule, no matter to what political party they have heretofore belonged; they are uniting with the first class, and act from principles of humanity and justice; and if the mists and shades of slavery were not the atmosphere in which gentlemen were enveloped, they would see constant and increasing numbers of our most worthy and intelligent citizens attaching themselves to the two classes mentioned, and rallying under the banners of abolitionism. They are compelled to go there, if the gentleman will have it so, in order to defend and perpetuate the liberties of the country. The hopes of the oppressed spring up afresh from this discussion of the gentleman.

The third class, the Senator says, are those who, to accomplish their ends, act without regard to consequences. To them, all the rights of property, of the States, of the Union, the Senator says, are nothing. He says they aim at other objects than those they profess—emancipation in the District of Columbia. No, says the Senator, their object is *universal emancipation*, not only in the District, but in the Territories and in the States. Their object is to set free three millions of negro slaves. Who made the Senator, in his place here, the censor of his fellow-citizens? Who authorized him to charge them with other objects than those they profess? How long is it since the Senator himself, on this floor, denounced slavery as an evil? What other inducements or objects had he then in view? Suppose universal emancipation to be the object of these petitioners; is it not a noble and praiseworthy object; worthy of the Christian, the philanthropist, the statesman, and the citizen? But the Senator says, they (the petitioners) aim to excite one portion of the country against another. I deny, sir, this charge, and call for the proof; it is gratuitous, uncalled for, and

unjust towards my fellow-citizens. This is the language of a stricken conscience, seeking for the palliation of its own acts by charging guilt upon others. It is the language of those who, failing in argument, endeavor to cast suspicion upon the character of their opponents, in order to draw public attention from themselves. It is the language of disguise and concealment, and not that of fair and honorable investigation, the object of which is truth. I again put in a broad denial to this charge, that any portion of these petitioners, whom I represent, seek to excite one portion of the country against another; and without proof I cannot admit that the assertion of the honorable Senator establishes the fact. It is but opinion, and naked assertion only. The Senator complains that the means and views of the abolitionists are not confined to securing the right of petition only; no, they resort to other means, he affirms, to the **BALLOT BOX**; and if that fail, says the Senator, their next appeal will be to the bayonet. Sir, no man who is an American in feeling and in heart, but ought to repel this charge instantly, and without any reservation whatever, that if they fail at the ballot box they will resort to the bayonet. If such a fratricidal course should ever be thought of in our country, it will not be by those who seek redress of wrongs, by exercising the right of petition, but by those only who deny that right to others, and seek to usurp the whole power of the Government. If the ballot box fail them, the bayonet may be their resort, as mobs and violence now are. Does the Senator believe that any portion of the honest yeomanry of the country entertain such thoughts? I hope he does not. If thoughts of this kind exist, they are to be found in the hearts of aspirants to office, and their adherents, and none others. Who, sir, is making this question a political affair? Not the petitioners. It was the slaveholding power which first made this move. I have noticed for some time past that many of the public prints in this city, as well as elsewhere, have been filled with essays against abolitionists for exercising the rights of free men.

Both political parties, however, have courted them in private and denounced them in public, and both have equally deceived them. And who shall dare say that an abolitionist has no right to carry his principles to the *ballot box*? *Who fears the ballot box?* The honest in heart, the lover of our country and its institutions? No, sir! It is feared by the tyrant; he who usurps power, and seizes upon the liberty of others; he, for one, fears the ballot box. Where is the slave to party in this country who is so lost to his own dignity, or so corrupted by interest or power, that he does not, or will not, carry his principles and his judgment into the ballot box? Such an one ought to have the mark of Cain in his forehead, and sent to labor among the negro slaves of the South. The honorable Senator seems anxious to take under his care the ballot box, as he has the slave system of the country, and direct who shall or who shall not use it for the redress of what they deem a political grievance. Suppose the power of the Executive chair should take under its care the right of voting, and should proscribe

any portion of our citizens who should carry with them to the polls of election their own opinions, creeds, and doctrines. This would at once be a death blow to our liberties, and the remedy could only be found in revolution. There can be no excuse or pretext for revolution while the ballot box is free. Our Government is not one of force, but of principle; its foundation rests on public opinion, and its hope is in the morality of the nation. The moral power of that of the ballot box is sufficient to correct all abuses. Let me, then, proclaim here, from this high arena, to the citizens not only of my own State, but to the country, to all sects and parties who are entitled to the right of suffrage, **TO THE BALLOT BOX!** carry with you honestly your own sentiments respecting the welfare of your country, and make them operate as effectually as you can, through that medium, upon its policy and for its prosperity. Fear not the frowns of power. It trembles while it denounces you. The Senator complains that the abolitionists have associated with the politics of the country. So far as I am capable of judging, this charge is not well founded; many politicians of the country have used abolitionists as stepping stones to mount into power; and, when there, have turned about and traduced them. He admits that political parties are willing to unite with them any class of men, in order to carry their purposes. Are abolitionists, then, to blame if they pursue the same course? It seems the Senator is willing that his party should make use of even abolitionists; but he is not willing that abolitionists should use the same party for their purpose. This seems not to be in accordance with that equality of rights about which we heard so much at the last session. Abolitionists have nothing to fear. If public opinion should be for them, politicians will be around and amongst them as thick and as noisy as the locusts of Egypt. The Senator seems to admit that, if the abolitionists are joined to either political party, there is danger—danger of what? That humanity and justice will prevail? that the right of petition will be secured to **ALL EQUALLY?** and that the long-lost and trodden African race will be restored to their natural rights? Would the Senator regret to see this accomplished by argument, persuasion, and the force of an enlightened public opinion? I hope not; and these petitioners ask the use of no other weapons in this warfare.

These ultra-abolitionists, says the Senator, invoke the power of this government to their aid. And pray, sir, what power should they invoke? Have they not the same right to approach this government as other men? Is the Senator or this body authorized to deny them any privileges secured to other citizens? If so, let him show me the charter of his power and I will be silent. Until he can do this, I shall uphold, justify, and sustain them, as I do other citizens. The exercise of power by Congress in behalf of the slaves within this District, the Senator seems to think, no one without the District has the least claim to ask for. It is because I reside without the District, and am called within it by the Constitution, that I object to the existence of

slavery here. I deny the gentleman's position, then, on this point. On this then, we are equal. The Senator, however, is at war with himself. He contends the object of the cession by the States of Virginia and Maryland, was to establish a seat of Government *only*, and to give Congress whatever power was necessary to render the District a valuable and comfortable situation for that purpose, and that Congress have full power to do whatever is necessary for this District; and if to abolish slavery be necessary to attain the object, Congress have power to abolish slavery in the District. I am sure I quote the gentleman substantially; and I thank him for this precious confession in his argument; it is what I believe, and I know it is all I feel disposed to ask. If we can, then, prove that this District is not as comfortable and convenient a place for the deliberations of Congress, and the comfort of our citizens who may visit it, while slavery exists here, as it would be without slavery, then slavery ought to be abolished; and I trust we shall have the distinguished Senator from Kentucky to aid us in this great national reformation. I take the Senator at his word. I agree with him that this ought to be such a place as he has described; but I deny that it is so. And upon what facts do I rest my denial? We are a Christian nation, a moral and religious people. I speak for the free States, at least for my own State; and what a contrast do the very streets of your Capital daily present to the Christianity and morality of the nation? A race of slaves, or at least colored persons, of every hue, from the jet black African, in regular gradation, up to the almost pure Anglo-Saxon color. During the short time official duty has called me here, I have seen the really red haired, the freckled, and the almost white negro; and I have been astonished at the numbers of the mixed race, when compared with those of full color, and I have deeply deplored this stain upon our national morals; and the words of Dr. Channing have, thousands of times, been impressed on my mind, that "a slave country reeks with licentiousness." How comes this amalgamation of the races? It comes from slavery. It is a disagreeable annoyance to persons who come from the free States, especially to their Christian and moral feelings. It is a great hindrance to the proper discharge of their duties while here. Remove slavery from this District and this evil will disappear. We argue this circumstance alone as sufficient cause to produce that effect. But slavery presents within the District other and still more appalling scenes—scenes well calculated to awaken the deepest emotions of the human heart. The slave-trade exists here in all its horrors, and unwhipt of all its crimes. In view of the very chair which you now occupy, Mr. President, if the massy walls of this building, did not prevent it, you could see the prison, the *pen*, the HELL, where human beings, when purchased for sale, are kept until a cargo can be procured for transportation to a Southern or foreign market, for I have little doubt slaves are carried to Texas for sale, though I do not know the fact.

Sir, since Congress have been in session, a mournful group of these unhappy beings, some thirty or forty, were marched as if in derision of members of Congress, in view of your Capitol, chained and manacled together, in open day-light, yes, in the very face of heaven itself, to be shipped at Baltimore for a foreign market. I did not witness this cruel transaction, but speak from what I have heard and believe. Is this District, then, a fit place for our deliberations, whose feelings are outraged with impunity with transactions like this? Suppose, sir, that mournful and degrading spectacle was at this moment exhibited under the windows of our chamber, do you think the Senate could deliberate, could continue with that composure and attention which I see around me? No, sir; all your powers could not preserve order for a moment. The feelings of humanity would overcome those of regard for the peculiar institutions of the States; and though we would be politically and legally bound not to interfere, we are not morally bound to hold our sympathy, and our execration in witnessing such inhuman traffic. This traffic alone, in this District, renders it an uncomfortable and unfit place for your seat of Government. Sir, it is but one or two years since I saw stand at the railroad depot, as I passed from my boarding house to this chamber, some large wagons and teams, as if waiting for freight; the cars had not then arrived. I was inquired of, when I returned to my lodging by my landlady, if I knew the object of those wagons which I saw in the morning. I replied, I did not; I suppose they came and were waiting for loading. "Yes, for slaves," said she; "and one of those wagons was filled with little boys and little girls who had been bought up through the country, and were to be taken to a southern market. Ah, sir," continued she, "it made my very heart ache to see them." The very recital unnerved and unfitted me for thought or reflection on any other subject for some time. It is scenes like this, of which ladies of my country and my state complained in their petitions, some time since, as rendering this District unpleasant, should they wish to visit the capital of the nation as wives, sisters, daughters, or friends of members of Congress. Yet, sir, these respectable females were treated here with contemptuous sneers; they were compared on this floor to the fish women of Paris, who dipped their fingers in the blood of revolutionary France. Sir, if the transaction in slaves here, which I have mentioned, could make such an impression on the heart of a lady, a resident of the District, one who had been used to slaves, and was probably an owner, what would be the feelings of ladies from free states on beholding a like transaction? I will leave every gentleman and every lady to answer for themselves. I am unable to describe it. Shall the capital of your country longer exhibit scenes so revolting to humanity, that the ladies of your country cannot visit it without disgust? No; wipe off the foul stain, and let it become a suitable and comfortable place for the seat of Government. The Senator, as if conscious that his argument on this point had proved too much, and of

course had proven the converse of what he wished to establish, concluded this part, by saying, that if slavery is abolished, the act ought to be confined to the city alone. We thank him for this small sprinkling of correct opinion upon this arid waste of public feeling. Liberty may yet vegetate and grow even here.

The Senator insists that the States of Virginia and Maryland would never have ceded this District if they had have thought slavery would ever have been abolished in it. This is an old story twice told. It was never, however, thought of, until the slave power imagined it for its own security. Let the States ask a retrocession of the District, and I am sure the free States will rejoice to make the grant.

The Senator condemns the abolitionists for desiring that slavery should not exist in the Territories, even in Florida. He insists that, by the treaty, the inhabitants of that country have the right to remove their EFFECTS when they please, and that, by this condition, they have the right to retain their slaves as effects, independently of the power of Congress. I am no diplomatist, sir, but I venture to deny the conclusion of the Senator's argument. In all our intercourse with foreign nations, in all our treaties in which the words "goods, effects, &c." are used, slaves have never been considered as included. In all cases in which slaves are the subject matter of controversy, they are specially named by the word "slaves;" and, if I remember rightly, it has been decided in Congress that slaves are not property for which a compensation shall be made when taken for public use, (or rather slaves cannot be considered as taken for public use,) or as property by the enemy, when they are in the service of the United States. If I am correct, as I believe I am, in the positions I have assumed, the gentleman can say nothing, by this part of his argument, against abolitionists, for asking that slavery shall not exist in Florida.

The gentleman contends that the power to remove slaves from one State to another, for sale, is found in that part of the Constitution which gives Congress the power to regulate commerce within the States, &c. This argument is *non sequiter*, unless the honorable Senator can first prove that slaves are proper articles for commerce. We say that Congress have power over slaves only as persons. The United States can protect persons, *but cannot make them property*, and they have full power in regulating commerce, and can, in such regulations, prohibit from its operations every thing but property; property made so by the laws of nature, and not by any municipal regulations. The dominion of man over things, as property, was settled by his Creator when man was first placed upon the earth. He was to subdue the earth, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth; every herb bearing seed, and the fruit of a tree yielding seed, was given for his use. This is the foundation of all right in property of every description. It is for the use of man the grant is made, and of course man cannot be included in the grant. Every municipal regulation then,

of any State or any of its peculiar institutions, which makes man property, is a violation of this great law of nature, and is founded in usurpation and tyranny, and is accomplished by force, fraud, or an abuse of power. It is a violation of the principles of truth and justice, in subjecting the weaker to the stronger man. In a Christian nation such property can form no just ground for commercial regulations, but ought to be strictly prohibited. I therefore believe it is the duty of Congress, by virtue of this power to regulate commerce, to prohibit, at once, slaves being used as articles of trade.

The gentleman says, the Constitution left the subject of slavery entirely to the States. To this position, I assent; and, as the States cannot regulate their own commerce, but the same being the right of Congress, that body cannot make slaves an article of commerce, because slavery is left entirely to the States in which it exists, and slaves within those States, according to the gentleman, are excluded from the power of Congress. Can Congress, in regulating commerce among the several States, authorize the transportation of articles from one State and their sale in another, which they have not power so to authorize in any State? I cannot believe in such doctrine; and I now solemnly protest against the power of Congress to authorize the transportation to, and the sale in, Ohio, of any negro slave whatever, or for any possible purpose under the sun. Who is there in Ohio, or elsewhere, that will dare deny this position? If Ohio contains such a recreant to her constitution and policy, I hope he may have the boldness to stand forth and avow it. If the States in which slavery exists love it as a household god, let them keep it there, and not call upon us in the free States to offer incense to their idol. We do not seek to touch it with unhallowed hands, but with pure hands, upraised in the cause of truth and suffering humanity.

The gentleman admits that, at the formation of our Government, it was feared that slavery might eventually divide or distract our country; and, as the BALLOT BOX seems continually to haunt his imagination, he says there is real danger of dissolution of the Union if abolitionists, as is evident they do, will carry their principles into the BALLOT BOX. If not disunion in fact, at least in feeling, in the country, which is always the precursor to the clash of arms. And the gentleman further says we are taught by holy writ, "that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." The moral of the gentleman's argument is, that truth and righteousness will prevail, though opposed by power and influence; that abolitionists, though few in number, are greatly to be feared; one, as I have said, may chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; and, as their weapons of warfare are not "carnal, but mighty to the pulling down of strong holds," even slavery itself; and as the ballot box is the great moral lever in political action, the gentleman would exclude abolitionists entirely from its use, and, for opinion's sake, deny them this high privilege of every American citizen. Permit me, sir, to remind the gentleman of another text

of holy writ. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion." The Senator says that those who have slaves, are sometimes supposed to be under too much alarm. Does this prove the application of the text I have just quoted? "Conscience sometimes makes cowards of us all." The Senator appeals to abolitionists, and beseeches them to cease their efforts on the subject of slavery, if they wish, says he, "to exercise their benevolence." What! Abolitionists benevolent! He hopes they will select some object not so terrible. Oh, sir, he is willing they should pay tithes of "mint and rue," but the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy, he would have them entirely overlook. I ought to thank the Senator for introducing holy writ into this debate, and inform him his arguments are not the sentiments of Him, who, when on earth, went about doing good.

The Senator further entreats the clergy to desist from their efforts in behalf of abolitionism. Who authorized the Senator, as a politician, to use his influence to point out to the clergy upon what they should preach, or for what they should pray? Would the Senator dare exert his power here to bind the consciences of men? I think not. By what rule of ethics, then, does he undertake to use his influence, from this high place of power, in order to gain the same object, I am at a loss to determine. Sir, this movement of the Senator is far more censurable and dangerous, as an attempt to unite Church and State, than were the petitions against Sunday mails, the report in opposition to which gained for you, Mr. President, so much applause in the country. I, sir, also appeal to the clergy to maintain their rights of conscience; and if they believe slavery to be a sin, we ought to honor and respect them for their open denunciation of it, rather than call on them to desist, for, between their conscience and their God, we have no power to interfere; we do not wish to make them political agents for any purpose.

But the Senator is not content to entreat the clergy alone to desist; he calls on his countrywomen to warn them, also, to cease their efforts, and reminds them that the ink shed from the pen held in their fair fingers when writing their names to abolition petitions, may be the cause of shedding much human blood! Sir, the language towards this class of petitioners is very much changed of late; they formerly were pronounced idlers, fanatics, old women and school misses, unworthy of respect from intelligent and respectable men. I warned gentlemen then that they would change their language; the blows they aimed fell harmless at the feet of those against whom they were intended to injure. In this movement of my countrywomen I thought was plainly to be discovered the operations of Providence, and a sure sign of the final triumph of *universal emancipation*. All history, both sacred and profane, both ancient and modern, bears testimony to the efficacy of female influence and power in the cause of human liberty. From the time of the preservation, by the hands of women, of the great Jewish

aw-giver, in his infantile hours, and who was preserved for the purpose of freeing his countrymen from Egyptian bondage, has woman been made a powerful agent in breaking to pieces the rod of the oppressor. With a pure and uncontaminated mind, her actions spring from the deepest recesses of the human heart. Denounce her as you will, you cannot deter her from her duty. Pain, sickness, want, poverty and even death itself form no obstacles in her onward march. Even the tender virgin would dress, as a martyr for the stake, as for her bridal hour, rather than make sacrifice of her purity and duty. The eloquence of the Senate, and clash of arms, are alike powerless when brought in opposition to the influence of pure and virtuous woman. The liberty of the slave seems now to be committed to her charge, and who can doubt her final triumph? I do not.—You cannot fight against her and hope for success; and well does the Senator know this; hence this appeal to her feelings to terrify her from that which she believes to be her duty. It is a vain attempt.

The Senator says that it was the principles of the Constitution which carried us through the Revolution. Surely it was; and to use the language of another Senator from a slave State, on a former occasion, these are the very principles on which the abolitionists plant themselves. It was the principle that all men are BORN FREE AND EQUAL, that nerved the arm of our fathers in their contest for independence.—It was for the natural and inherent rights of *man* they contended. It is a libel upon the Constitution to say that its object was not liberty, but slavery, for millions of the human race.

The Senator, well fearing that all his eloquence and his arguments thus far are but as chaff, when weighed in the balance against truth and justice, seems to find consolation in the idea, and says that which opposes the ulterior object of abolitionists, is that the general government has no power to act on the subject of slavery, and that the Constitution or the Union would not last an hour if the power claimed was exercised by Congress. It is slavery, then, and not liberty, that makes us one people. To dissolve slavery, is to dissolve the Union. Why require of us to support the Constitution by oath, if the Constitution itself is subject to the power of slavery, and not the moral power of the country? Change the form of the oath which you administer to Senators on taking seats here, swear them to support slavery, and according to the logic of the gentleman, the Constitution and the Union will both be safe. We hear almost daily threats of dissolving the Union, and from whence do they come?—from citizens of the free States? No! From the slave States only. Why wish to dissolve it? The reason is plain that a new government may be formed, by which we, as a nation, may be made a slaveholding people. No impartial observer of passing events, can, in my humble judgment, doubt the truth of this. The Senator thinks the abolitionists in error, if they wish the slavholder to free his slave. He asks, why denounce him? I cannot admit the truth of the question; but I might well ask the gentleman,

and the slaveholders generally, "why are you angry at me, because I tell you the truth?" It is the light of truth which the slaveholder cannot endure; a plain unvarnished tale of what slavery is, he considers a libel upon himself. The fact is, the slaveholder feels the leprosy of slavery upon him. He is anxious to hide the odious disease from the public eye, and the ballot box and the right of petition, when used against him, he feels as sharp reproof; and being unwilling to renounce his errors, he tries to escape from their consequences, by making the world believe that he is the persecuted, and not the persecutor. Slaveholders have said here, during this very session, "the fact is, slavery will not bear examination." It is the Senator who denounces abolitionists for the exercise of their most unquestionable rights, while abolitionists condemn that only which the Senator himself will acknowledge to be wrong at all times and under all circumstances. Because he admits that if it was an original question whether slaves should be introduced among us, but few citizens would be found to agree to it, and none more opposed to it than himself. The argument is, that the evil of slavery is incurable; that the attempt to eradicate it would commence a struggle which would exterminate one race or the other. What a lamentable picture of our government, so often pronounced the best upon earth! The seeds of disease, which were interwoven into its first existence, have now become so incorporated into its frame, that they cannot be extracted without dissolving the whole fabric; that we must endure the evil without hope and without complaint. Our very natures must be changed before we can be brought tamely to submit to this doctrine. The evil will be remedied; and, to use the language of Jefferson again, "this people will yet be free." The Senator finds consolation, however, in the midst of this existing evil, in color and caste. The black race (says he) is the strong ground of slavery in our country. Yes, it is *color*, not right and justice, that is to continue forever slavery in our country. It is prejudice against color, which is the strong ground of the slaveholder's hope. Is that prejudice founded in nature, or is it the effect of base and sordid interest? Let the mixed race which we see here, from black to almost perfect white, springing from white fathers, answer this question.—Slavery has no just foundation in color: it rests exclusively upon usurpation, tyranny, oppressive fraud, and force. These were its parents in every age and country of the world.

The Senator says, the next or greatest difficulty to emancipation is, the amount of property it would take from the owners. All ideas of right and wrong are confounded in these words: emancipate property, emancipate a horse, or an ox, would not only be an unmeaning, but a ludicrous expression. To emancipate, is to set free from slavery. To emancipate, is to set free a man, not property. The Senator estimates the number of slaves—*men* now held in bondage—at three millions in the United States. Is this statement made here by the same voice which was heard in this Capitol in favor of the liberties of

Greece, and for the emancipation of our South American brethren from political thralldom? It is; and has all its fervor in favor of liberty been exhausted upon foreign countries, so as not to leave a single whisper in favor of three millions of men in our own country, now groaning under the most galling oppression the world ever saw? No, sir. Sordid interest rules the hour. Men are made property, and paper is made money, and the Senator, no doubt, sees in these two peculiar institutions a power which, if united, will be able to accomplish all his wishes. He informs us that some have computed the slaves to be worth the average amount of \$500 each. He will estimate within bounds at \$400 each. Making the amount twelve hundred millions of dollars' worth of slave property. I heard this statement, Mr. President, with emotions of the deepest feeling. By what rule of political or commercial arithmetic does the Senator calculate the amount of property in human beings? Can it be fancy or fact, that I hear such calculation, that the people of the United States own twelve hundred millions' (double the amount of all the specie in the world) worth of property in human flesh! And this property is owned, the gentleman informs us, by all classes of society, forming part of all our contracts within our own country and in Europe. I should have been glad, sir, to have been spared the hearing of a declaration of this kind, especially from the high source and the place from which it emanated. But the assertion has gone forth that we have twelve hundred millions of slave property at the South; and can any man so close his understanding here as not plainly to perceive that the power of this vast amount of property at the South is now uniting itself to the banking power of the North, in order to govern the destinies of this country? Six hundred millions of banking capital is to be brought into this coalition, and the slave power and the bank power are thus to unite in order to break down the present administration.—There can be no mistake, as I believe, in this matter. The aristocracy of the North, who, by the power of a corrupt banking system, and the aristocracy of the South, by the power of the slave system, both fattening upon the labor of others, are now about to unite in order to make the reign of each perpetual. Is there an independent American to be found, who will become the recreant slave to such an unholy combination? Is this another compromise to barter the liberties of the country for personal aggrandisement? "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

The Senator further insists, "that what the law makes property is property." This is the predicate of the gentleman; he has neither facts nor reason to prove it; yet upon this alone does he rest the whole case that negroes are property. I deny both the predicate and the argument. Suppose the Legislature of the Senator's own State should pass a law declaring his wife, his children, his friends, indeed, any white citizen of Kentucky, *property*, and should they be sold and transferred as such, would the gentleman fold his arms and say, "Yes, they are property, for the law has made them such?" No, sir; he would de-

nounce such law with more vehemence than he now denounces abolitionists, and would deny the authority of human legislation to accomplish an object so clearly beyond its power.

Human laws, I contend, cannot make human beings property, if human force can do it. If it is competent for our Legislatures to make a black man *property*, it is competent for them to make a white man the same; and the same objection exists to the power of the people in an organic law for their own government; they cannot make property of each other, and, in the language of the Constitution of Indiana, such an act "can only originate in usurpation and tyranny." Dreadful, indeed, would be the condition of this country, if these principles should not only be carried into the ballot box, but into the presidential chair. The idea that abolitionists ought to pay for the slaves if they are set free, and that they ought to think of this, is addressed to their fears, and not to their judgment. There is no principle of morality or justice that should require them or our citizens generally to do so. To free a slave is to take from usurpation that which it has made property and given to another, and bestow it upon the rightful owner. It is not taking property from its true owner for public use. Men can do with their own as they please, to vary their peace if they wish, but cannot be compelled to do so.

The gentleman repeats the assertion that has been repeated a thousand and one times: that abolitionists are retarding the emancipation of the slave, and have thrown it back fifty or a hundred years; that they have increased the rigors of slavery, and caused the master to treat his slave with more severity. Slavery, then, is to cease at some period; and because the abolitionists have said to the slaveholder, "Now is the accepted time," and because he thinks this an improper interference, and not having the abolitionists in his power, he inflicts his vengeance on his unoffending slave. The moral of this story is, the slaveholder will exercise more cruelty because he is desired to show mercy. I do not envy the Senator the full benefit of his argument. It is no doubt a true picture of the feelings and principles which slavery engenders in the breast of the master. It is in perfect keeping with the threat we almost daily hear; that if petitioners do not cease their efforts in the exercise of their constitutional rights, others will dissolve the Union. These, however, ought all to be esteemed idle assertions and idle threats.

The Senator tells us that the consequences arising from the freedom of slaves, would be to reduce the wages of the white laborer. He has furnished us with neither data nor fact upon which this opinion can rest. He, however, would draw a line, on one side of which he would place the slave labor, and on the other side free white labor; and looking over the whole, as a general system, both would appear on a perfect equality. I have observed, for some years past, that the southern slaveholder has insisted that his laborers are, in point of integrity, morality, usefulness, and comfort, equal to the laboring population of the North.

Thus endeavoring to raise the slave, in public estimation, to an equality with the free white laborer of the North; while, on the other hand, the northern aristocrat has, in the same manner, viz : by comparison, endeavored to reduce his laborers to the moral and political condition of the slaves of the South. It is for the free white American citizens to determine whether they will permit such degrading comparisons longer to exist. Alrcady has this spirit broken forth in denunciation of the right of universal suffrage. Will free white laboring citizens take warning before it is too late ?

† The last, the great, the crying sin of abolitionists, in the eyes of the Senator, is that they are opposed to colonization, and in favor of amalgamation. It is not necessary now to enter into any of the benefits and advantages of colonization; the Senator has pronounced it the noblest scheme ever devised by man; he says it is powerful but harmless. I have no knowledge of any benefits resulting from the scheme to either race. I have not a doubt as to the real object intended by its founders; it did not arise from principles of humanity and benevolence towards the colored race, but a desire to remove the free of that race beyond the United States, in order to perpetuate and make slavery more secure. The Senator further makes the broad charge, that abolitionists wish to enforce the unnatural system of amalgamation. We deny the fact, and call on the Senator for proof. The citizens of the free States, the petitioners against slavery, the abolitionists of the free States in favor of amalgamation! No, sir! If you want evidence of the fact, and reasoning in support of amalgamation, you must look into the slave States; it is there it spreads and flourishes from slave mothers, and presents all possible colors and complexions, from the jet black African, to the scarcely to be distinguished white person. Does any one need proof of this fact? let him take but a few turns through the streets of your capital, and observe those whom he shall meet, and he will be perfectly satisfied. Amalgamation, indeed! The charge is made with a very bad grace on the present occasion. No, sir; it is not the negro woman, it is the slave and the contaminating influence of slavery, that is the mother of amalgamation. Does the gentleman want facts on this subject? let him look at the colored race in the free States; it is a rare occurrence there. A colony of blacks, some three or four hundred, were settled, some fifteen or twenty years since, in the county of Brown, a few miles distant from my former residence in Ohio, and I was told by a person living near them, a country merchant with whom they dealt, when conversing with him on this very subject, he informed me he knew of but one instance of a mulatto child being born amongst them for the last fifteen years; and I venture the assertion, had this same colony been settled in a slave State, the cases of a like kind would have been far more numerous. I repeat again, in the words of Dr. Channing, it is a slave country that reeks with licentiousness of this kind, and for proof I refer to the opinions of Judge Harper, of North Carolina, in his defence of southern slavery.

The Senator, as if fearing that he had made his charge too broad, and might fail in proof to sustain it, seems to stop short, and make the inquiry, where is the process of amalgamation to begin; he had heard of no instance of the kind against abolitionists; they, (the abolitionists,) would begin it with the laboring class; and if I understand the Senator correctly, that abolitionism, by throwing together the white and the black laborers, would naturally produce this result. Sir, I regret, I deplore, that such a charge should be made against the laboring class—that class which tills the ground, and in obedience to the decree of their Maker, eat their bread in the sweat of their face—that class, as Mr. Jefferson says, if God has a chosen people on earth, they are those who thus labor. This charge is calculated for effect, to induce the laboring class to believe that if emancipation takes place, they will be, in the free States, reduced to the same condition as the colored laborer. The reverse of that is the truth of the case. It is the slaveholder now, he who looks upon labor as only fit for a servile race, it is him and his kindred spirits who live upon the labor of others, endeavoring to reduce the white laborer to the condition of the slave. They do not yet claim him as property, but they would exclude him from all participation in the public affairs of the country. It is further said, that if the negroes were free, the black would rival the white laborer in the free States. I cannot believe it, while so many facts exist to prove the contrary. Negroes, like the white race, but with stronger feelings, are attached to the place of their birth, and the home of their youth; and the climate of the South is congenial to their natures, more than that of the North. If emancipation should take place at the South, and the negro be freed from the fear of being made merchandize, they would remove from the free States of the North and West, immediately return to that country, because it is the home of their friends and fathers. Already in Ohio, as far as my knowledge extends, has free white labor, (emigrants,) from foreign countries, engrossed almost entirely all situations in which male or female labor is found. But, sir, this plea of necessity and convenience is the plea of tyrants. Has not the free black person the same right to the use of his hands as the white person; the same right to contract and labor for what price he pleases? Would the gentleman extend the power of the government to the regulation of the productive industry of the country? This was his former theory, but put down effectually by the public voice. Taking advantage of the prejudice against labor, the attempt is now being made to begin this same system, by first operating on the poor black laborer. For shame! let us cease from attempts of this kind.

The Senator informs us that the question was asked fifty years ago that is now asked, can the negro be continued for ever in bondage? Yes; and it will continue to be asked, in still louder and louder tones. But, says the Senator, we are yet a prosperous and happy nation. Pray, sir, in what part of your country do you find this prosperity and happiness in the slave States? No! no! There all is weakness, gloom, and

despair, while in the free States all is light, business, and activity. What has created the astonishing difference between the gentleman's State and mine—between Kentucky and Ohio? Slavery, the withering curse of slavery is upon Kentucky, while Ohio is free. Kentucky, the garden of the West, almost the land of promise, possessing all the natural advantages, and more than is possessed by Ohio, is vastly behind in population and wealth. Sir, I can see from the windows of my upper chamber, in the city of Cincinnati, lands in Kentucky, which, I am told, can be purchased from ten to fifty dollars per acre, while lands of the same quality, under the same improvements, and the same distance from me in Ohio, would probably sell from one to five hundred dollars per acre. I was told by a friend a few days before I left home, who had formerly resided in the county of Bourbon, Kentucky—a most excellent county of lands adjoining I believe the county in which the Senator resides—that the white population of that county was more than four hundred less than it was five years since. Will the Senator contend, after a knowledge of these facts, that slavery in this country has been the cause of our prosperity and happiness? No, he cannot. It is because slavery has been excluded and driven from a large proportion of our country, that we are a prosperous and happy people. But its late attempts to force its influence and power into the free States, and deprive our citizens of their unquestionable rights, has been the moving cause of all the riots, burnings, and murders that have taken place on account of abolitionism; and it has, in some degree, even in the free States, caused mourning, lamentation, and woe. Remove slavery, and the country, the whole country, will recover its natural vigor, and our peace and future prosperity will be placed on a more extensive, safe, and sure foundation. It is a waste of time to answer the allegations that the emancipation of the negro race would induce them to make war on the white race. Every fact in the history of emancipation proves the reverse; and he that will not believe those facts, has darkened his own understanding, that the light of reason can make no impression: he appeals to interest, not to truth, for information on this subject. We do not fear his errors, while we are left free to combat them. The Senator implores us to cease all commotion on this subject. Are we to surrender all our rights and privileges, all the official stations of the country, into the hands of the slaveholding power, without a single struggle? Are we to cease all exertions for our own safety, and submit in quiet to the rule of this power? Is the calm of despotism to reign over this land, and the voice of freemen to be no more heard? This sacrifice is required of us, in order to sustain slavery. *Freemen*, will you make it? Will you shut your ears and your sympathies, and withhold from the poor, famished slave, a morsel of bread? Can you thus act, and expect the blessings of heaven upon your country? I beseech you to consider for yourselves.

Mr. President, I have been compelled to enter into this discussion from the course pursued by the Senate on the resolutions I submitted a

few days since. The cry of abolitionist has been raised against me. If those resolutions are abolitionism, then I am an abolitionist from the sole of my feet to the crown of my head. If to maintain the rights of the States, the security of the citizen from violence and outrage, if to preserve the supremacy of the laws, if insisting on the right of petition, a medium through which every person subject to the laws has an undoubted right to approach the constitutional authorities of the country, be [the doctrines of abolitionists, it finds a response in every beating pulse in my veins. Neither power, nor favor, nor want, nor misery, shall deter me from its support while the vital current continues to flow.

Condemned at home for my opposition to slavery, alone and single-handed here, well may I feel tremor and emotion in bearding this lion of slavery in his very *den* and upon his own ground. I should shrink, sir, at once, from this fearful and unequal contest, was I not thoroughly convinced that I am sustained by the power of truth and the best interests of the country.

I listened to the Senator of Kentucky with undivided attention. I was disappointed, sadly disappointed. I had heard of the Senator's tact in making compromises and agreements on this floor, and though opposed in principle to all such proceedings, yet I hoped to hear something upon which we could hang a hope that peace would be restored to the borders of our own States, and all future aggression upon our citizens from the free States be prevented. Now, sir, he offers us nothing but unconditional submission or political death; and not political alone, but absolute *death*.—We have counted the cost in this matter, and are determined to live or die free. Let the slaveholder hug his system to his bosom in his own State, we will not go there to disturb him; but, sir, within our own borders we claim to enjoy the same privileges. Even, sir, here in this District, this ten miles square of common property and common right, the slave power has the assurance to come into this very Hall and request that we—yes, Mr. President, that my constituents—be denied the right of petition on the subject of slavery in this District. This most extraordinary petition against the right of others to petition on the same subject of theirs, is graciously received and ordered to be printed; pæans sung to it by the slave power, while the petitions I offer, from as honorable, free, high-minded and patriotic American citizens as any in this District, are spit upon, and turned out of doors as an *unclean thing*. Genius of liberty! how long will you sleep under this iron power of oppression? Not content with ruling over their own slaves, they claim the power to instruct Congress on the question of receiving petitions; and yet we are tauntingly and sneeringly told that we have nothing to do with the existence of slavery in the country, a suggestion as absurd as it is ridiculous. We are called upon to make laws in favor of slavery in the District, but it is denied that we can make laws against it;—and at last the right of petition on the subject, by the people of the free States, is complained of as an improper interference. I leave it to the

Senator to reconcile all these difficulties, absurdities, claims, and requests of the people of this District, to the country at large; and I venture the opinion that he will find as much difficulty in producing the belief that he is correct now, that he has found in obtaining the same belief that he was before correct in his views and political course on the subject of banks internal improvements, protective tariffs, &c., and the regulation, by acts of Congress, of the productive industry of the country, together with all the compromises and coalitions he has entered into for the attainment of those objects. I rejoice, however, that the Senator has made the display he has on this occasion. It is a powerful shake to awaken the sleeping energies of liberty, and his voice, like a trumpet, will call from their slumbers millions of freemen to defend their rights; and the overthrow of his theory now, is as sure and certain, by the force of public opinion, as was the overthrow of all his former grand schemes, by the same mighty power.

I feel, Mr. President, as if I had wearied your patience, while I am sure my own bodily powers admonish me to close; but I cannot do so without again reminding my constituents of the greetings that have taken place on the consummation and ratification of the treaty, offensive and defensive, between the slaveholding and bank powers, in order to carry on a war against the liberties of our country, and to put down the present administration. Yes, there is no voice heard from New England now. Boston and Faneuil Hall are silent as death. The free-day-laborer is, in prospect, reduced to the political, if not moral condition of the slave; an ideal line is to divide them in their labor; yes, the same principle is to govern on both sides. Even the farmer, too, will soon be brought into the same fold. It will be again said, with regard to the government of the country, "The farmer with his huge paws upon the statute book, what can he do?" I have endeavored to warn my fellow-citizens of the present and approaching danger, but the dark cloud of slavery is before their eyes, and prevents many of them from seeing the condition of things as they are. That cloud, like the cloud of summer, will soon pass away, and its thunders cease to be heard. Slavery will come to an end, and the sunshine of prosperity warm, invigorate and bless our whole country.

I do not know, Mr. President, that my voice will ever again be heard on this floor. I now willingly, yes, gladly, return to my constituents, to the people of my own State. I have spent my life amongst them, and the greater portion of it in their service, and they have bestowed upon me their confidence in numerous instances. I feel perfectly conscious that, in the discharge of every trust which they have committed to me, I have, to the best of my abilities, acted solely with a view to the general good, not suffering myself to be influenced by any particular or private interest whatever; and I now challenge those who think I have done otherwise, to lay their finger upon any public act of mine, and prove to the country its injustice or anti-republican tendency. That I have often erred in the selection of means to accomplish

important ends I have no doubt, but my belief in the truth of the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence, the political creed of President Jefferson, remains unshaken and unsubdued. My greatest regret is that I have not been more zealous, and done more for the cause of individual and political liberty than I have done. I hope, on returning to my home and my friends, to join them again in rekindling the beacon fires of liberty upon every hill in our State, until their broad glare shall enlighten every valley, and the song of triumph will soon be heard, for the hearts of our people are in the hands of a just and holy being, (who cannot look upon oppression but with abhorrence,) and he can turn them whithersoever he will, as the rivers of water are turned.—Though our national sins are many and grievous, yet repentance, like that of ancient Nineveh, may divert from us that impending danger which seems to hang over our heads as by a single hair. That all may be safe, I conclude that the NEGRO WILL YET BE SET FREE.

